

Bus safety outlined

Children should never run back to a school bus to retrieve an object they've left behind, according to Ryder Student Transportation Services, one of the nation's leading student transportation companies.

Running back to a school bus is the most common source of serious accidents involving children and school buses, said Marvin Compton, national and safety manager of Ryder Student Transportation Services.

"Children think their parents or teacher will be angry if they leave something on the bus, so they often run back to retrieve it as the bus is pulling away," Compton said. "Parents need to teach their children that sweaters, lunch boxes and school papers can all be replaced, but children cannot."

Active participation of parents is critical to the operation of a safe student transportation system, Compton said. "Proper school bus safety precautions must be constantly reinforced at home."

Ryder conducts safety and training programs for student passen-

gers, including one that uses a miniature robotic school bus.

PARENTS SHOULD teach their children the following school safety procedures:

- Plan to be at the bus stop several minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Wait for the bus in a safe place, clear of traffic and away from where the bus stops. Avoid horseplay and respect the privacy and property of others while waiting for the bus.

- Respect the "danger zone," a 10-foot-wide area surrounding a bus on all sides. Remain at least 10 feet from the bus until it has come to a complete stop, then board in a single file without running or pushing. When leaving the bus, walk 10 feet from the bus and remain there until it has left the bus stop. "Because children often can't relate to distances measured in feet, parents should express it as five giant steps," Compton said.

- Do not extend your hands, elbows or head through the windows, or throw or pass objects to someone outside the bus.

Ryder Student Transportation Services transports 200,000 students each school day in 4,800 buses serving 125 school districts in 14 states.

see them. That's not true. Even with multiple large mirrors and intensive safety training, a driver cannot see a small child who is very near the body of the bus.

- When it is necessary to cross the street upon boarding or leaving the bus, walk at least five giant steps from the bus to the shoulder of the road and remain there until given a signal by the driver that it is safe to cross.

- Do not allow large objects, such as musical instruments or athletic equipment, to block the aisles or emergency exits.

- When entering the bus, go directly to an available or assigned seat. Remain seated and facing forward at all times while the bus is moving.

- Do not extend your hands, elbows or head through the windows, or throw or pass objects to someone outside the bus.

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Utility alert

Beware of customer rebate scams

A utility rebate is delivered right to your door by two people claiming to be employees of the utility. What do you do? Let them in? Or check them out?

Spring is the season when con artists are likely to show up in your neighborhood, so Detroit Edison cautions you to be particularly careful about admitting people into your home.

A common scam that has been used on metro Detroiters involves two imposters who claim they are utility employees delivering a rebate to the customer. The object of the scam is to gain entry into the home to determine where the residents keep their money. One partner distracts the victim while the other robs the home.

"Several elderly persons have

been victimized by that scam," said Richard Dugny, director of security for Detroit Edison and a retired 25-year veteran of the Detroit Police Department.

Detroit Edison employees wear their identification prominently and rarely travel in pairs, Dugny said. "Two people appearing at the door should be an indication that you should be careful."

The rebate scam is just one of several con games used to get into the home.

TO AVOID being victimized, follow these three simple guidelines before admitting anyone into your home and know the people who serve you.

- Ask for identification. Before admitting any Detroit Edison em-

ployee into your home, check for proper identification. All Detroit Edison employees carry identification cards or badges displaying their photos and clearly labeled as Detroit Edison identification.

- Call Detroit Edison. If you are not sure about an employee's identification. The toll-free phone number is on your bill. Dugny suggests that you copy the number and keep it with your other emergency phone numbers. "The best rule to follow is never let anyone inside your home until you are sure who the person is."

- Detroit Edison employees never deliver cash refunds or rebates to a customer's home. All account transactions of this nature are handled through the U.S. mail or at a Detroit Edison customer office.

Heart disease still major killer

AP — More Americans die from diseases of the blood and heart in one year than were killed in the United States' four major wars of this century, according to newly released figures.

In World Wars I and II and the Korean and Vietnam wars, 636,282 Americans were killed. In 1985, the latest year for which there are accurate figures, 991,332 Americans died of heart attacks, strokes and other blood vessel diseases.

Heart attacks, the nation's leading cause of death, killed 540,800 people in 1985, accounting for 26 percent of the 2,084,000 deaths that year. Strokes, the nation's third-deadliest disease in 1985, killed 152,700. (The second leading cause of death in 1985 was cancer, which killed 457,670 people.)

By comparison, 407,316 Americans died in World War II, the nation's deadliest war.

DESPITE the numbers, experts believe that many people fail to recognize the scope of this group of illnesses, which don't seem to evoke as much fear as lesser killers.

"I don't think people appreciate the fact that more than 50 percent of the deaths in this country are still due to heart disease," said Dr. Howard E. Morgan of the Geisinger Clinic in Danville, Pa.

Morgan is president of the American Heart Association, which re-

leased the statistics recently at the start of its annual science writers forum.

"We are trying to get through to people how important this is," he said in an interview. "Much of the premature death and disability can be prevented these days if one uses the facts that are currently available about reducing cardiovascular risk."

Experts believe that a sizable share of deaths from heart attack and strokes can be prevented if people stop smoking, get their blood pressure down and watch their diets to lower cholesterol levels.

Dr. Bernadine Healy of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation said people fail to perceive the scope of cardiovascular disease "in part because the disease is one where the afflictions are so dignified. It does not have the visible problems associated with cancer, the ease of hospitalization of cancer. It doesn't quite have the drama of something like AIDS."

HEALY, PRESIDENT-ELECT of the heart association, said that many adults misunderstand the importance of living right to avoid heart trouble. But that message is frequently lost on children and teen-agers, who eat poorly and smoke.

"My bias is that the American Heart Association needs to develop a major initiative directed at women and children," she said. "Women have the greatest opportunity to

raise the awareness of the young. Mothers tend to set the stage for the environment of the household."

The heart association estimates that one American dies of cardiovascular disease every 32 seconds.

Of those who die of heart attacks, about 60 percent die almost instantly or within an hour after their symptoms strike.

However, the news is not entirely grim. The association estimates that nearly 1 million Americans will survive heart attacks this year.

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